**Rotating Elements: Characters, Voice and Transitions**

**By: Halley Sodergren Writing to Learn**

**Subject: English Grade Level: 9-12**

**Time Allotted: 90 minutes**

**Materials Needed:**

* Four portraits
* Character Profile Worksheets
* Story Elements Graphic Organizer
* Visual Display of Story Elements
* Writing Utensils

**Objectives:**

* Students will review the elements of a story.
* Students will be introduced to voice and effective transitions.
* Students will be made aware of the importance of characterization.
* Students will interpret reading and practice writing.

**Standards Addressed:**

Michigan Standards & Benchmarks @ <http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MichiganCurriculumFramework_8172_7.pdf>

**Content Standard 6. Voice**

All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

Benchmark 2: Evaluate the power of using multiple voices in their oral and written communication to persuade, inform, entertain, and inspire their audiences.

**Content Standard 2. Meaning and Communication**

All students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.

Benchmark 2: Recognize and approximate authors' innovative techniques to convey meaning and influence an audience when composing their own texts. Examples include experimentation with time, stream of consciousness, multiple perspectives, and use of complex grammatical conventions.

**Content Standard 3.Meaning and Communication**

All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Benchmark 7: Recognize and use varied innovative techniques to construct text, convey meaning, and express feelings to influence an audience. Examples include experimentation with time, order, stream of consciousness, and multiple points of view.

**General Overview:**

Students will review the different elements of a story and put them creatively to use. Groups will receive a portrait, which will become their main character to a story that they will collectively write. Groups characterize this person in the photo through a serious of written questions and discussion. After the group agrees on their character and its attributes, each member begins writing the beginning of a story with this character serving as the main character. After 10 minutes, each member rotates papers clockwise to the next group member who will now continue the story with the rising action. Repeat rotation until each story element is completed, ending in the resolution. Remind students about voice and transitions.

**Procedure:**

1. Perform mini lesson on the elements of a story (Beginning, Rising action (conflict), climax, Falling action, and resolution. (5 min)
2. Hand out character profiles and photographs (see attached). Explain directions: (20 min)
   1. Teacher assigned groups will receive a character portrait along with a character profile questionnaire. Students will quickly go through the questions and concisely come up with answers to help define who their character is based off of their visual photograph. After answering the questions, students must come up with three to four sentences that best describe their character.
3. Review the elements of a story and ask what the students know about voice and effective transitions. (3 min)
4. Hand out the Elements of Story graphic organizer (see attached). Explain directions (45 min)
   1. Each group member has a paper and will start writing a *beginning* to a story of their choice with the character previously defined in their groups.
   2. After 10 minutes, rotate papers clockwise. At this point everyone is writing the *rising action* of their former group member’s story. Remind students to notice the author’s voice and try to transition smoothly while continuing the story. Also, to be creative!
   3. Continue to rotate until everyone’s story is completed with a *resolution*.
   4. Once the paper that each student started reaches them, have the students first read silently and then aloud to their group members.
5. Have each group choose one story to read to the entire class and share. (10 min)
6. Review concepts and ask if there are any further questions (7 min)

**Rationale:**

This lesson gives students a creative way to review the elements of the story as well as be introduced to voice and effective transitions. Also, it gives students time to write in class and share.

**Evaluative Procedures:**

If desired, a teacher can collect the stories and perform a checklist to see if all elements of a story are present and/or how effectively written the story is.